

Report to Licensing Committee

Date of meeting: 16th October 2019

Subject: On Line Disclosure and Barring Checks



**Epping Forest
District Council**

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Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry, ext.4246

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To amend the current taxi licence conditions to include the requirement for the applicant to subscribe to the DBS Update service and to give consent to access by Council licensing officers

Report:

1. The Licensing Team currently carries out a Disclosure & Barring check (previously known as criminal record checks) on all applicants for taxi licences as part of its licensing responsibility to protect public safety. As an enhanced check is required it must be applied for by the local authority and not the individual, the cost of which is paid initially by the Council and then recovered from the driver's licence fee. The process is repeated at renewal, typically every 3 years.
2. The online process has now been streamlined to make it simpler and less time consuming to update the existing DBS records. Following an informal discussion with our Licensing Portfolio Holder it is now suggested that all applicants are required, as part of their licence condition, to register for the online Update Service and agree to allow the Council access to check the certificate at any time. The cost to the driver is currently £13 a year.
3. The advantages to the Council are that the Licensing Team will no longer need to process a further DBS application at licence renewal; the on-line check provides immediate information where the current system may take several weeks; and, assuming there are no significant administrative changes to the licensee details, officers can check the status of a taxi drivers DBS certificate at anytime during the licence period, not just at a new application.
4. The advantage to the taxi driver is that he/she can simply update the DBS records annually without having to make a further detailed paper application to the Council.
5. If Members agree, a new condition will be added (by way of an amendment) to the Council's Taxi Driver licence conditions, to require the applicant, within 28 days, to subscribe to the DBS Update Service and to give consent to access by Council licensing officers.

Resource Implications:

The proposed changes will reduce officer time in processing renewal of DBS certificates to be paid directly by the applicant without involving the Council

Legal and Governance Implications:

The requirement for enhanced DBS checks are in accordance with the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy to comply with its responsibilities as the licensing authority under the Taxi licensing Legislation.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications: paperless working environment

The Licensing Team ensures that the Council meets its licensing objectives to prevent crime and disorder; protect public safety, prevent public nuisance and protect children from harm under the Taxi Licensing legislation which links closely to the Councils overarching corporate objective to keep the district safe. A streamlined on-line system of updating DBS records will ensure the information is readily accessible and current.

Consultation Undertaken: N/A

Safeguarding

To ensure public safety which is one of the objectives of the Council in its role as licensing authority

Background Papers: N/A

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management:

Equality and Diversity: N/A